

# Sharpe Bros win prestigious national safety award

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Sharpe Bros has taken out the “Best Workplace Health and Safety Practices in Small Business” prize in the 2008 National Safe Work Awards.

After winning the NSW WorkCover Award for Best Practices in Workplace Health and Safety, Sharpe Bros. has gone on to win the National Award.

The Award was presented by Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard MP to brothers Michael, Richard and Hayden Sharpe at a ceremony in the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra, on Monday 28 April, coinciding with international activities for World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

The family owned business developed an innovative response to complacency in the workplace by creating a playful green mascot – Safety Bro - to promote occupational health and safety around their worksites.

Sharpe Bros. spokesperson, Michael Sharpe, said the original idea developed from the iconic Big Brother character from George Orwell's novel 'Nineteen eighty-four' who is always watching and ever-present.

"Unlike the oppressive Big Brother, however, Safety Bro is a nice guy and soon became everybody's best mate. Safety Bro has become an integral member of the team and has inspired renewed enthusiasm for safety issues," Mr Sharpe said.

"Safety Bro stickers are plastered all over our worksites and machines, we send his safety messages in regular text messages and OHS announcements, and he even has his own website and MySpace page.

"Safety Bro's encouraging messages about safe work practices such as 'What would Safety Bro think?' have become favourite catch-cries for our staff."

The National Safe Work Australia Awards, organised by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council, are the premier national OHS awards in Australia. The Awards promote continuous improvement in OHS by recognising excellence at the government, organisational and individual level.

Chairman of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council, Mr Bill Scales, said Sharpe Bros had created a great concept and had shown terrific initiative resulting in an improvement in the safety culture of the business.

"Sharpe Bros successfully utilised marketing and information technology channels making a fun and easily integrated concept accessible at a range of different levels," Mr Scales said.

The innovative and interactive Safety Bro program is now available to other companies looking to reinvigorate concern for safety in their workplaces.